

EARLY BIRD 4 – 11 January 2013

LEADERS/POLITICS

New Year's Reception of the U.S. Army – Farewell is difficult (Jan. 11)

Garrison Commander LTC Michael D. Runey emphasized in his speech: “We loved living and serving here.” In 2014 the U.S. Army will leave the city. For Runey, it was an occasion to thank local city and county officials and representatives of local associations and businesses for the great years in Schweinfurt, the hospitality and the many encounters with various people. He also remembered Christmas markets, the city “Volksfest” (carnival) and the “Fasching” parade. Two men drew special attention at the New Year's reception held at the Community Club on Conn Barracks - Captain Jake Bradfield and First Sergeant Richard Fletcher of the Cavalry. Part of their uniform is a Stetson. And like one American lady said: “Those boys go nowhere without their Stetson.” The two were the only ones from their unit, 1st Squadron, 91st (Airborne) Cavalry. Their fellow Soldiers are in Afghanistan.

Utilities company wins concession from Niederwerrn (Jan. 11)

As of 2014 the city utility company will also be responsible for the power networks in Niederwerrn. The contract will be signed by the middle of the month. The community of Niederwerrn is already a customer of the city's utility company for gas, water and bus transportation. The city utility company competed with the power supplier “Überlandzentrale Lültsfeld” for the contract. Director of the city utility company, Thomas Stepputat, stated, “I am glad that city utility company succeeded against the Überlandzentrale Lültsfeld. Since the city utilities company already supplies gas and water to Niederwerrn the successful business partnership will be expanded now with the power supply. It is part of a strategy for development which is required for economical reasons which also includes securing jobs and creating new jobs.”

Charity Concert for children in Namibia (Jan. 8)

Rainer Nowak, President of the Lions Club, thanked everyone for attending the concert in the sold out theater and stated: “Tonight all of you are supporting a good cause the Schweinfurt Charity Organization “Aid for children in the 3rd World” and its new project a kindergarten “House Schweinfurt” in Bukalo, Namibia which will open on 25 January 2013.” The new Kindergarten for 70 four- to six-year old children, many of them Aids orphans, will be managed by a Capuchin Monk from India. Next to preparing them for school, the children will receive hot meals and psychological therapy. The Schweinfurt Lions Club provides furniture, books and school supplies, toys, food and child care. Last year the Lions Club donated 30,000 Euros for social aid and furthering of young people.

SAFETY/SECURITY

500 liters of hydrofluoric acid spilled near Würzburg (Jan. 8)

On Monday night at 12:40 a.m. an incident occurred in the area of a trucking company in the district of Würzburg. When loading hazardous material, 500 liters of acid was spilled resulting in a large-scale operation of fire departments, rescue services and police. The accident happened in the entrance area of the trucking company where so-called IBC-boxes, containing 1,000 liters of acid were loaded on a truck with a fork lift. When the first container was loaded, the second container was damaged with the fork lift causing the spillage of approximately 500 liters of hydrofluoric acid, a liquid very acid substance that reacts with oxygen and causes severe burns on the skin and respiratory tract. 10 people were taken to nearby hospitals for treatment. Furthermore a number of truck drivers who were in the vicinity of the accident had to be decontaminated. The area of the trucking company remains closed until a decision is made as to what to do with the damaged container and what other measures have to be taken.

Crash at intersection: Two people injured, €10,000 damage (Jan. 4)

On Saturday night a traffic accident which occurred at intersection Schelmsrasen/Nikolaus-Hofmann-Strasse in Schweinfurt caused €10,000 damage and two people sustaining minor injuries. A 36-year old female driver drove into the intersection and did not see another car coming. The driver of the other car hit the brakes and swerved trying to avoid a collision; however; in vain. The two cars collided and the second car was thrown into another vehicle due to the impact of the collision.

New driver stopped – had 0.5 per mille blood alcohol level (Jan. 4)

Drivers who just received their licenses are specially observed. They are not allowed to drive even with the slightest percentage of alcohol in their blood. The 19-year old driver, who was travelling on John-F.-Kennedy-Ring on Sunday morning and was stopped by the police during a routine control, also should have been aware of this. The police officers noticed alcohol on his breath and administered a breathalyzer test which resulted in 0.54 per mille. The 19-year old driver will have to pay a considerable fine and may have his driver's license withdrawn.

Swimming in the Main River at 5 degrees Celsius (Jan. 7)

After heavy rain during the previous week, the river had an extraordinary strong current. The water temperature is 5.5 degrees Celsius (41.9 Fahrenheit), the air temperature is 7 degrees Celsius (44.6 Fahrenheit). Hannah Lieb, a fifteen year old swimmer, who can hardly wait to get into the cold water, is one of 144 swimmers participating in the Three Kings Swimming event of the German Life-Saving Association – District Lower Franconia. 123 participants swim the entire distance of 5 kilometers from Randersacker to the “Löwenbrücke” in Würzburg, where helpers are waiting with warm blankets, hot tea and “Glühwein”. Hans Ebert, who participated in this event 27 times said: “This year the water is almost comfortable for seasoned swimmers; however; this is not always the case. I remember a time when we had to swim with ice floes. But we wanted to demonstrate to the people that lifeguards will go out even under worst circumstances.” 31 years ago when the German Life-Saving Association organized the first “Three Kings Swimming Event” the question was – is it even necessary to practice rescuing people from the Main River? Today it's a different situation. The Main River gets more and more popular for swimmers during the summer. The German Life-Saving Association has lifeguards on-call and also has a quick reaction group 24/7. The Life-Saving Association with 900,000 members and sponsors is the largest, voluntary water rescue organization in the world.

62,000 life guards watch out for the safety of swimmers and water-athletes 2.1 million hours a year.

ECONOMY

Largest optical machine starts operations. (Jan. 9)

At 85 tons and 7 meter high, the machine will produce precise speculums with diameters up to two meters for space research in series. In this field there has been a considerable demand for mirrors of a high quality which cannot be met by many producers stated Wolfgang Heubisch, Bavarian Minister of Science on Wednesday during an opening ceremony. The production in Lower Bavaria will begin by the end of this year. Goal of the researches is to get involved in the production of the World's largest telescope of the European Southern Observatory.

Europe threatened by a new social divide (Jan. 9)

The balance has not been this bleak in 20 years. Almost 19 million people in the European Union are unemployed. This is an unemployment rate of 11.8 percent. In countries such as Greece and Spain, every second youth will not be able to get a job. In Italy 37.1 percent of the young people will not be able to find jobs. The EU welfare commissioner Laszlo Andor, who announced the latest figures on Tuesday, states, "The trend is alarming. There is a new divide in the EU. While member states such as Germany, Austria and the Netherlands are well off in comparison, the southern and eastern countries are sliding deeper and deeper into an abyss." Five years ago the unemployment rate between North and South were almost the same. Today there is a difference of 7.5 percent. In Greece alone the unemployment rate rose by 7.1 to 26 percent last year. At the same time the incomes decrease in the affected regions. Families in Greece have to live on 17 percent less than in 2009, in Spain they have 8 percent less income and on Cyprus the income decreased by 7 percent. In Germany incomes increased in spite of economical crisis. 2012 was a bad year for Europe in regard to unemployment and a worsening social situation. A considerable improvement is unlikely, since the battle against the Euro crisis and social isolation improves very slowly. The gap between countries that are trapped in a downward spiral of declining work capacity, increasing unemployment of the young generation and sinking incomes and countries with robust social systems and reformed job markets gets wider and wider. Especially threatened by poverty are next to young people, single mothers, unemployed women and workers who have been unemployed for a longer period of time. The unemployment rate for people who have been unemployed for a longer period of time increased from 3 to 4.6 percent. In the Baltic States every seventh person is without a job. However; the analysis shows that the new social question often has man-made reasons. Important reforms on the job market and in the economy have been left alone for many years. The creation of new jobs by developing new industry branches was neglected. Andor mentioned specifically jobs in the environmental field, information and communication technologies as well as the health sector. The report from Brussels states: "Modern social systems for unemployed people, active job market politics and a job-friendly legislation and orientation of politics towards maintaining jobs are guaranties for an improvement of the situation."

SPORT

The Mighty Dogs lose another game against Bad Tölz (Jan. 7)

Compared to the weak game against Füssen the Mighty Dogs played a better game against Bad Tölz and were able to balance a 0:2 deficit in the final period but then Füssen scored another goal and won 3:2.

After a 2:4 deficit against Deggendorf the Mighty Dogs won 5:4 with penalty shots (Jan. 8)

With a major effort in the last minute the Mighty Dogs won against Deggendorf 5:4 with penalty shots and achieved their first victory in 2013.